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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001047

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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SUBJECT: DARFUR POLITICAL PROCESS: UN/AU PLANS STILL LACK
FOCUS

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Classified By: CDA A. Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

UN/AU: Can't Wait for SPLM, Abdulwahid

¶1. (C) In advance of the Darfur summit meeting scheduled for Tripoli July 15-16, the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) are assessing the viability of two parallel efforts to energize the Darfur political process: a conference for Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories hosted by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Southern Sudan and a meeting of non-signatory political leaders, including Abdulwahid al-Nur, Ahmed Diraij, Khamis Abdullah, Sharif Harir, Abdullah Yehia, and Ahmed Abdulshafi. In a briefing for the Darfur Partners Group in Khartoum on July 1, the UN/AU emphasized the urgency of progress on the political track, saying that neither delays in the SPLM initiative nor the intransigence of individual rebel leaders, such as al-Nur, should stall the peace process.

Juba Meeting to Clarify SPLM Role

¶2. (C) Pekka Haavisto, the senior advisor to UN Envoy Jan Eliasson, and Sam Ibok, the head of DPA implementation and the co-chair of the UN/AU Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST), will travel to Juba on July 2 for a meeting with First Vice President Salva Kiir and Eritrean official Yemane Gharaeb. They hope to determine what role the SPLM can play in the Darfur political process and how the UN/AU can increase the likelihood of a successful SPLM effort. A UN mediation expert reported that the SPLM was in the process of formulating its Darfur strategy and hoped to convene a conference in three to four weeks. It remained unclear whether the conference would include both Darfur civil society and rebel groups. The mediation expert said that the SPLM "recognized that it does not have a full grasp of the situation in Darfur and sufficient contacts" and had welcomed UN/AU assistance. The SPLM had also made clear that they intended the conference to lead to a mediation process under the UN/AU, not Eritrea. (Note: The July 2 meeting among the UN, AU, SPLM, and Eritrea will confirm this point. End note.)

¶3. (C) Based on recent meetings in Juba, including with Kiir, CDA said that the "the SPLM has a more mature realization of

their role" and remained committed to facilitating the Darfur political process. The SPLM had expressed "no hesitation" in acknowledging the UN/AU lead and were assessing the situation in Darfur and in regional capitals, such as Asmara and Tripoli. "I left moderately positive on the strength of SPLM engagement," said the CDA, noting that the SPLM had expressed a desire to be represented at the upcoming Tripoli summit. Ibok said that he still "had deep concerns about the initiative." Kiir had articulated realistic goals for the SPLM that the SPLM Taskforce on Darfur then muddled. Embassy suggested that the UN and AU consider drafting a memorandum of understanding with the SPLM to avoid ambiguity on its role and detail the support required from the UN, AU, and international community.

A New Rebel Meeting?

¶4. (C) Haavisto was examining possibilities for an inclusive meeting of non-signatory political leaders in the near future. While offering few specifics, he indicated this could take place before the Tripoli summit in order to inform those discussions. The meeting would build on recent contact between Diraij and Shafi, which had been facilitated by the UK, according to Haavisto. Al-Nur, however, continued to claim that he had his own plan to re-organize the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), though he had not shared it with the UN and AU. They had in turn concluded that they would continue to consult with al-Nur, press him to explain his plans, but could not delay the political process in response to his intransigence. The French Ambassador suggested that al-Nur is "beginning to understand that things are moving around him" and that she had learned from Paris that he was now mentioning the SPLM conference and the UN/AU mediation in "positive terms." Poloff said that two initiatives currently had momentum: the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD)

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meeting in Kenya and the SPLM conference in Southern Sudan. He suggested that the UN/AU had the ability to "tip the scales" in favor of both rather than focusing on a new meeting and explained that the CHD meeting could be underway as early as July 9. (Note: Unconfirmed reports have surfaced that the UN and AU are also considering inviting some non-signatories to the Tripoli summit. It is unclear how a meeting of Darfur political leaders or the presence of non-signatories in Tripoli intersect with the proposed CHD meeting in Kenya, which has received support from the UN and AU. End note.)

Comment

¶5. (C) Facing a volatile political environment, the UN and AU regularly shift their tactical focus. On June 24, the UN and AU described their priority as repairing the rift between Darfur political and military leaders (reftel). One week later, they are now considering a meeting of political leaders with no stated outcome. Through contact at all levels, we should continue to encourage the UN and AU to remain focused on supporting a successful CHD-organized meeting in Kenya to mitigate the fissures in the SLM, a conference of non-signatories in Southern Sudan to prepare them for negotiations, and a UN/AU-led negotiating process on the principles of "shuttle diplomacy." A firm commitment to these steps from the UN and AU, which should be ratified during the upcoming Tripoli meeting, would provide a center of gravity for international efforts on the political process. End comment.

¶6. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
FERNANDEZ